

A PASTOR'S STANCE ON THE INDEPENDENT BAPTIST FRIENDS INTERNATIONAL

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The following is from Pastor Gary Webb, Calvary Baptist Church, Carrboro, North Carolina
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Dear Calvary members and others who are acquainted with our church,

Recently I was asked what involvement our church has with the “Independent Baptist Friends International” – a new Baptist fellowship started by Clarence Sexton, pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Powell, Tennessee, and president of Crown College. When I asked the reason for the question I was told that our church was listed on the IBFI website as a participating church.

There are a number of good men who participated in this conference. However, there have also been a number of Baptist pastors who have expressed their concern or opposition to this new fellowship. No one at Calvary asked to be listed on the website, nor were we contacted. According to the person who asked about our church’s involvement, last week during the conference Dr. Sexton made several statements about how many churches were registering to be on his Baptist Friends website. However, because a number of pastors and churches have complained about their names being on the list without permission, a disclaimer has now been posted on the website.

Although we would appreciate many things about some of the men and the expressed goals of the conference, our church has no connection with the IBFI. I am one of those who have serious concerns about the fellowship and the effect it will have on independent Baptists. I am not writing to tell other churches what to do, but to make clear our position on this fellowship. Some of the reasons for my concern are as follows:

1. Doctrinal heresy:

Included in the speakers was Dr. Brian Green, pastor of Calvary Free Grace Baptist Church in England. Pastor Green and CFGBC are Calvinists of the strongest kind – holding to “5 point Calvinism” that includes belief in a Limited Atonement (Christ only died for the elect) and Irresistible Grace (those who are called by God cannot resist). Their statement of faith states very plainly that they believe that souls were not only elected to salvation by God in eternity past, but that God also “reprobated” souls in eternity past – meaning that they were condemned to Hell and could not be saved. This is heresy (see John 3:16, I John 2:2, etc.).

Dr. Jack Schaap, pastor of First Baptist in Hammond (former church of Jack Hyles) was also a key speaker. Schaap preaches a false gospel that excludes repentance (see Matthew 4:17, Luke

13:3, Luke 24:47, Acts 17:30, Acts 20:21, Acts 26:20, etc.). He has written perverted things about communion and our relationship to the Lord, comparing them to sexual acts in his book, Marriage: The Divine Intimacy.

Although the website for IBFI initially contained a doctrinal statement, it has recently been removed.

2. Unqualified speakers:

John Stancil was a speaker at the “Faithful Men’s Sessions”. John Stancil used to work for the Sword but was disqualified when his marriage ended in divorce and his immorality became public. John Stancil may not be a pastor, but should he be a featured speaker in the “Faithful Men’s Sessions”?

Pastor Jack Schaap was also fully aware of the immorality of Jack Hyles and Dave Hyles, and performed the wedding for Dave Hyles to one of his later wives. His cover-up of the many moral atrocities at First Baptist is well-documented.

3. Compromising speakers:

Some of the speakers continue to preach with pastors and churches in the Southern Baptist Convention, notably Ralph Sexton, Jr. and Andrew Phipps (see Romans 16:17-18).

4. Encouragement of compromise:

A repeated theme in the messages of the conferences is that no one should criticize anyone who is winning souls. Tom Sexton in particular made this statement. This is directly contrary to the teaching of the Bible (Romans 16:17) and also contradicts the practice of Paul who openly reproofed Peter for his unscriptural practice (see Galatians 2:11-14). Though there are some strong Baptists who participated in this conference, if they continue to fellowship with those who exhort them to not speak out against error for the sake of unity, the effect will be destructive to Bible Christianity.

5. Setting an uncertain doctrinal stand:

Although most of the men in the IBFI are men who believe that the King James Bible is the only English translation that should be used because it is translated from the preserved Word of God, one of the speakers was Mike Shrock, staff evangelist for Bob Jones University. The position of BJU on the Bible version issue is well-known as they are one of the strongest supporters of the Critical Text and modern translations, and are open opponents to the Received Text and the King James Bible. Should Baptists preach together with those who question the very text of the Bible? (See Revelation 22:18-19)

Independent Baptist churches are free to associate with whomever they wish to fellowship, but their fellowship should be guided by the Word of God. Calvary does not tell other churches and pastors how to conduct their ministry, but we want to be clear that we are NOT a part of the Independent Baptist Friends International. I am concerned that this fellowship will bring greater compromise into the already small and decreasing testimony to New Testament Christianity in our nation.

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